

*Jenkins (Wal.)*

# PROSTITUTION

## AND ITS MANAGEMENT.

CONSIDERATION OF THE LICENSE SYSTEM IN EUROPE  
AND IN ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI.

SPECIAL REPORT TO BOARD OF HEALTH

OF

LOUISVILLE, KY.,

BY

COL. WALWORTH JENKINS,

CHIEF OF POLICE.

LOUISVILLE:

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1873.

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## PROSTITUTION AND ITS MANAGEMENT.

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*To the Board of Health of Louisville :*

GENTLEMEN—Some time since the undersigned was requested by resolution of this Board to correspond with different authorities regarding the systems for regulating the social evil. There have been various causes which have prevented my making this report at any earlier date. The implied and understood object of this resolution was to contrast the "license system," as established in certain cities of continental Europe, with the "*laissez faire*" plan, or "no system at all," as is common in America.

I have corresponded to some extent with the authorities of different cities, and with other persons likely to afford me the desired information, but have received but little valuable matter, except from Captain James McDonough, the Chief of Police at St. Louis, Missouri, the only city in the United States, to my knowledge, where the license system has been adopted, and from Professor Edmund Andrews, of the Chicago Medical College, a gentleman of high social and professional standing, who has given this subject great care and attention for many years. I am under very great obligations to these gentlemen, and shall, in the subjoined report, quote very freely from the annual reports of the Chief of Police of St. Louis, Missouri, for 1870 and 1871, and from Professor Andrews' pamphlets, entitled "Venereal diseases and prostitution under the license system of Europe," and "Prostitution and its sanitary management."

The duty imposed upon me is one that I approach with extreme reluctance, not only on account of its great importance and my inability to do it justice, but principally because my ideas, notions, and prejudices regarding this subject are firmly rooted, and may naturally color any report I may make. But however I may differ with public sentiment, and doubtless with some members of your

honorable body, I shall at least claim from you the merit of being conscientious in my views and deductions from the statistics to which I have had recourse. As before said, I shall make free use of the pamphlets to which I have made reference, in very many cases adopting Prof. Andrews' words as well as his views and statistics, and awarding him at the outset with the credit of whatever information this report may contain.

The question which presents itself most strongly to the American mind, as our cities approximate in population to those of continental Europe, adopting their vices, and almost ignoring their virtues, is whether the social evil shall be prohibited by law, and contended against by the police, or be tolerated as unavoidable and placed under police and sanitary surveillance. The arguments adduced on both sides of this question are numerous, but are mostly theoretical. What we want are facts and figures; a full understanding of the license system and its practical results; whether it diminishes disease, and if it does not increase rather than diminish prostitution; and, finally, what is our duty in respect to this social evil.

History shows that all efforts that have been made for centuries to suppress prostitution by the power of the law have uniformly failed, and have ended in either a tacit or express toleration. There are two classes of social offenses: one class, such as theft, burglary, and murder, is committed upon unwilling victims, and in these cases the sufferer is the ally of the police, and naturally does his best to help them prevent crime, or bring the criminal to punishment. But in the other class of offenses, such as drunkenness, gambling, and prostitution, both parties are in collusion, and do their best to shield themselves and each other from detection or interference, and hence in these cases the police are without allies, and have always been obliged to tolerate misdemeanors, of whose existence they were well aware, to an extent much greater than they do in cases of theft and robbery. In these things the police can only succeed in proportion as they are aided by the law, and not hindered by legal technicalities, and are sustained by an increased moral purity and intellectual advancement of the public.

Passing over the efforts made in Italy, France, Spain, and other countries to suppress this evil, all of which signally failed, your attention is invited to the action taken in Prussia and in the city of Berlin, as found in various articles on prostitution in the *Westminster Review* for 1869-70. Prostitutes were tolerated in a do-nothing



kind of a way until the Reformation, when repressive measures were attempted, but with such poor success that after some variations they were abandoned. Prostitutes were then tolerated, but required to live in a certain quarter of the city. This produced such a decline of the value of property in that vicinity that real estate owners brought great pressure to bear on the Government, and a new suppression was attempted. After ten years' trial, during which vice and disease increased, the present system of toleration and regulation was adopted, which in its turn is falling into disrepute, from the utter inability of the police, by their own confession, to get more than a small fraction of those whom they believe to be prostitutes under registration and control.

In the city of Philadelphia, the police at one time assailed the prostitutes with such energy, that at length there was not a single known brothel left in the city. But the result was an evil, greater, perhaps, than toleration, and which appears to have always cropped out when police efforts were more energetic than the morality of the community would sustain. In the instance referred to, the prostitutes, driven from their usual haunts, boldly got recommendations of good character and took positions as servants and nurses in respectable families, and thus carried on their business under cover, often by the connivance of the master of the house. The horror of respectable housekeepers, who chanced to have sons growing to manhood, with such women in daily contact with them, may be easily conceived. This difficulty, combined with the fact that police energy can never be kept long straining at an aim much above the current morality of the community, broke down the plan, and caused a return to a sort of toleration, and to-day Philadelphia is no better off in this respect than other large cities.

In Chicago and Louisville no system of any kind has been regularly pursued. The police have never believed that they could eradicate the houses, and have felt obliged to give them a kind of semi-official toleration. Occasionally parties have been arrested or indicted, but the women paid their fines, or succeeded in having them set aside, and at once resumed their business in the same places. This class of persons, as a rule, are located in certain well-known sections of our city, and as long as they conduct themselves in an orderly manner they are tacitly tolerated. Whenever they act otherwise, or move into a respectable neighborhood, the police endeavor to break up their establishments, and force them into those localities

where there is less objection to their presence. Raids or continual indictments only scatter them either into a respectable neighborhood, or, as in Philadelphia, drive them into private families.

The general result of all experiments at repression is, that in small towns of high moral tone the combination of a virtuous and educated public sentiment, with judicious police action, is able to make a very encouraging headway against this class of offenders; but where public sentiment does not go hand in hand with all their measures, the police are left without allies, and can do almost nothing. It further appears that when police action is at once severe and far ahead of the moral sentiment of the population, the prostitutes are driven into private families and other places as employees, and become by contact with respectable young persons, new centers of corruption. There is no wonderful quack remedy for the immediate cure of this evil. It will be suppressed just in proportion as public virtue and intelligence grow among all classes and lend their support and power to any police measures which may be adopted. It must be attacked with broad plans and wide measures.

Repression has been a total failure. The license system, with varying details but the same general plan, has been adopted in Italy, Spain, France, Holland, Belgium, and Prussia, and during the past two years and a half in the city of St. Louis, Missouri. In this latter place the ordinance requires the usual registry, examinations, etc., divides the city into districts, each under the care of one medical examiner with a stipulated salary. Each examiner goes alone to houses and apartments of the prostitutes, where he is directed to make inquiries, and if he thinks necessary, physical examinations. He then gives such sanitary directions as he judges best, and orders any of the inmates to be removed to the hospital, whose condition, in his opinion, requires it. There are two great mistakes in this part of the system. As the physician is allowed his discretion about the physical examinations, and as he can save a vast amount of time and labor by omitting them, it may be expected that this part of the work will be very inefficiently done. Again, the plan of sending young physicians, alone, to private interviews with young and handsome women of this character, often living semi-respectably in their own apartments, will infallibly corrupt a large part of the examiners, and when the facts begin to come out, it will bring the characters of all of them into scandalous disrepute.

The proposition to register and regulate what we find ourselves



compelled in some form to tolerate, has, at first glance, such an air of practical common sense about it, that most persons are predisposed to hope more from the plan than experience justifies. The idea of compelling all prostitutes to register and taking the diseased under treatment, has such an appearance of completeness and practicability, that one is predisposed to say at once, that here is a plan capable of rooting out most of this class of diseases that affect the community. But the theory is not sustained by the results. To those who have not investigated the subject of compulsory registration in practical form, the idea of compelling the women to register seems very simple and easy. They say that all that is necessary is to pass an ordinance with suitable penalties, and the result is secured. The experience of the most powerful and best organized police forces in the world, shows that failure has been the inevitable result. Compelling women to do anything they do not wish to do, generally terminates like Governor Peter Stuyvesant's efforts to make the Dutch girls of New Amsterdam wear more petticoats. He was forced to desist enforcing his ordinance for fear they would at length leave them off altogether.

Experience the world over shows that compulsory registration is a failure, and that nine-tenths of this class of women do not and will not register, and can not be compelled to do so, and that the published statistics in those cities where registration is compulsory have little if any value, from the fact that only a very small per cent. of the prostitutes are registered, while the large majority escape the forced registry, and their skill in evasion increases year by year, and the small fraction now on the registry books is yearly growing less.

The great argument used in favor of the license system is the assertion that it diminishes venereal diseases in the community. But the statistics show that such diseases are five or six per cent. more abundant than in cities which have no such system. It is further proven that the license system actually increases prostitution. The following table will show the proportion of registered prostitutes to the population, in licensed cities, without taking into account the number of prostitutes practically known to the police, but whom they are unable to register:

Paris, one prostitute to every.....	281
Brussels, one to every.....	435
Berlin, one to every.....	437

Copenhagen, one to every.....	564
Hamburg, one to every.....	359
La Hague, one to every.....	750
Rotterdam, one to every.....	267
Amsterdam, one to every.....	286
Turin, one to every.....	198
Bordeaux, one to every.....	270
Brest, one to every.....	159
Lyons, one to every.....	424
Marseilles, one to every.....	286
Nantz, one to every.....	378
Strasbourg, one to every.....	251
Algiers, one to every.....	102
St. Louis, one to every.....	242

✓ Average of one to every 384 inhabitants.

The following table shows the proportion of prostitutes known to the police to the population in cities not licensed :

Louisville, one prostitute to every.....	280
Chicago, one to every.....	230
New York, one to every.....	518
London, one to every.....	544
Liverpool, Bristol, and Plymouth, one to every.....	193
Brighton and Bath, one to every.....	244
Ipswich, one to every.....	309
Manchester, one to every.....	557
Norwich, one to every.....	478
Leeds, one to every.....	654
Birmingham, one to every.....	709
Sheffield, one to every.....	709
Glasgow, one to every.....	394
Madrid, one to every.....	270

Average of one to every 414 inhabitants.

This shows that the proportion of registered prostitutes to population is twenty-five per cent. greater in cities adopting the license system than in those not adopting it.

In the city of St. Louis, Mo., where the license system is in operation, as per report of the Police Commissioners for the year ending March 31st, 1871, there were 1,284 registered prostitutes, or one to every 242 inhabitants. In our own city, where the license system is not in force, and where we do not lay claim to any remarkably high tone of morality, but rather to the contrary, there were 107

houses of prostitution and assignation known to the police, with 410 prostitutes and inmates of assignation houses, or one to every 280 inhabitants. The total number of bawds registered in St. Louis from July 25th, 1870, when the license system went into operation, to March 31st, 1872, was 2,052. On the 31st of March, 1871, there were 1,284 registered, and on the 31st of March, 1872, there were 703 registered, and the authorities claim that the license system has thus decreased prostitution over forty-five per cent. in a year's time. The authorities admit that this reduction is in a measure owing to the fact that a large number of names of prostitutes, who have manifested a desire to reform, have been stricken from the register by advice of the medical examiners, and that advantage has been taken of the misplaced confidence by many, who have plied their vocation without complying with the law, and have entirely evaded the surveillance of the police. In the face of such admissions the claim set up by the authorities falls to the ground. The Chief of Police claims that the number of public women has uniformly decreased each year. The experience of other cities where this system has been tried, leads us to believe that only the number registering, as required by law, has decreased, and that in St. Louis, as elsewhere, they have learned how to avoid the operations of the law. The Chief also claims, as one of the results of the license system, that the prostitutes are more decorous in their manner in public, and that the plying of their trade upon the public streets has been almost entirely discontinued. The Chief's report for the year ending March 31, 1871, shows that out of 3,722 females arrested, 1,526 were prostitutes and 218 keepers of bawdy houses, or a total of 1,744, being over forty-six per cent. of all females arrested. The report for the year ending March 31, 1872, shows that out of 4,187 females arrested, 2,613 were prostitutes and 71 keepers of bawdy houses, or a total of 2,684, being over sixty-four per cent. of all females arrested, showing an increase of 940 prostitutes, or fifty-three per cent. over the previous year. Comment is unnecessary.

It would take more time and space than would be expected in such a report as this to enter fully into a proper comparison of the license system with the tolerated plan. Each system has its advocates, arguments, and theories. There are also various legal principles involved in establishing a license system. Hon. George Andrews, late Judge of the Supreme Court of Tennessee, towards the close



of an article on the legal aspects of this subject, gives as his opinion that "the license system, as applied to our large cities, and to be enforced by our municipal authorities and a political police, will be found to be not only a humbug, but a nuisance."

The experience of the past plainly shows that the European compulsory registry only enrolls a small fraction of the women; that the system of forced medical examinations, with attempts to consign the diseased to hospital prison, totally fails to abate the prevalence of disease; that it is better for us not to copy European failures, but to develop our own system; that this system should consist, on the part of the police, in a strictly tacit toleration of the orderly prostitutes, a private classified registry, free hospital assistance for the diseased, and fines and imprisonment for the disorderly. On the part of society there should be an extension of the present efforts to reform the fallen and to rescue the young candidates from shame. Measures should also be taken, through the pulpit and the press, to warn the unwary of the physical as well as the moral dangers of licentiousness, and of the inefficiency of all known measures to render prostitution safe.

I do not believe in licensing gambling, prostitution, or any other kind of crime. In the language of a delegate to the National Police Convention at St. Louis, "I am satisfied that with all the protection afforded by law, we can not eradicate disease from these houses. To legalize the existence of this evil is simply proclaiming to the world that a young man, or a married man, can go there with perfect safety and be free from exposure. It is paving the way to destruction with flowers, and making it desirable, instead of showing the danger of the way, and is an invitation to vice and social and moral ruin. It clothes vice with the dignity of a profession, and the legal protection afforded it gives it a power and influence for evil and not for good that it never had before."

Repression must be based upon reform. The erection and maintenance of an institution for the accommodation of the fallen would go far toward abating this evil. Prevention in preference to punishment should be the mark to which our efforts should be directed. "Let the friends of humanity, those who are blessed with the means, unite to establish some little, quiet, industrial home, a little way from the temptations of the crowded city, where the *prodigal daughter* may flee for refuge; where, surrounded by objects that may lead to higher and nobler thoughts, she can, with her own hands, at least earn the necessities of life."

To those who feel any special interest in this great subject, I would suggest a careful examination of the discussion on this question as it came up before the National Police Convention at St. Louis, in October, 1871, and as published in pamphlet form; also, to the pamphlet of Prof. Andrews, before referred to, and of which I have made free use in this report, and also to my remarks on this subject, as embodied in my last annual report to the Mayor and General Council, on pp. 278 to 282 of Municipal Reports for 1871.

I do not know that I can more properly close this report than with the following article from a poor Magdalen of our city, addressed to the editor of one of our daily papers on the 8th of October, 1872. It is as follows:

HOW SHALL REFORMATION BE EFFECTED?—THE SAD EXPERIENCE  
OF A FALLEN WOMAN.—A SOUND FROM THE DEPTHS.

*“Louisville, Ky., October 8, 1872.*

“Please allow me, through the columns of your paper, to express a few opinions, and do not marvel at my presumption in making this request when I assert, to begin with, that I belong to that class of persons known as fallen women! Do not, I beseech you, let this assertion so disgust you as to cast this in the waste basket without reading further. I have heard a great deal of late concerning the measures being taken to rid Louisville of our degrading presence. To accomplish this purpose seems to be all that is needed to make Louisville a moral city, as we are regarded as one of the greatest prevailing evils; and I do not pretend to dispute the fact. On the other hand, I admit our evil influence over the community at large, and I regret that I have fallen—that there is such a thing in existence as a fallen woman—but regrets are useless. We are here, all the same, and the question is, what are we to do if our homes are broken up? Some one might exclaim, go to work. That is a good idea, to be sure. But where is the work? There are but few among us but would prefer work to our present mode of living.

“But where is the work? Will the spoilers of our homes give us employment? Would they open their doors to us and say: ‘Here is a home; here is a chance for you to earn an honest living?’ Would their wives, daughters, or sisters give us a smile of welcome, a word of encouragement? Far from it. To the reverse, they would shrink from the contamination as they would from poison.

And here is an illustration. I will in a brief manner give a bit of my experience. I became remorseful for my sins. I resolved to reform. I started out in quest of a home. I found one in a part of the city where I was unknown. I accepted the first one offered—wages one dollar per week. I went about my duties with a light heart during the day. At night I was summoned to join the family circle to attend prayers previous to retiring. No pen can portray the emotions I experienced while kneeling there. How vividly the scene brought to my mind my childhood's home. How glad I was to have found a home like this. Then my conscience rose to accuse me. Was I doing right to remain with this good family an impostor!

"Ought I not to make a confession, and abide by their decision in regard to staying? I confided my story next day to the lady of the house. I humbled myself to ask to be allowed to remain—promising to do right. What was the result? She would like very much to oblige me, but she could not conscientiously do so. Would advise me to enter some charitable institution. Well, my ambition was gone; my hopes crushed; and I, as may be supposed, returned to my old starting point. I could not sail under false colors. I was honorable enough not to impose myself unknown in their household; was repulsed when known. This is only one case. Thousands such remain untold. And people preach up reformation for fallen women—pray for them, yet refuse to engage them even as menials in their households. I do not write this because I am opposed to the object of abolishing this evil. But I say, go on with your work. No one wishes for your success more than I. But I would advise ye workers to use kind words. Offer employment to the outcasts. There are but few women so degraded but kind words will reach their hardened hearts. Break up our houses if you will; but give us a chance in the world to do better, for we are human beings, and must live somewhere.

"C. E. R."

The experience of this poor woman is that of thousands more. "There are plenty of kind hearts to commiserate the condition of fallen women; but what has been done to prevent or relieve? Fathers and mothers, who send their sons and daughters from a quiet country home to mingle with the busy throng in the crowded city, little dream of the ten thousand allurements and temptations that



beset them on every side. Our own citizens even do not seem to comprehend the dangers. A young woman comes here to seek honest employment, and is too often doomed to disappointment, when, in the absence of means of support, or friends to council and direct, the base destroyer, aided by her necessity, steps forward to claim his victim. Again, as in the case above referred to, she who has fallen, and would set out in her almost hopeless attempt to reform, where shall she look to find friends or employment? Money or means she has none; food and raiment she must have; the doors of her old associates are always open to receive her, where she is again surrounded with influences that will surely drag her down to their common level." The Great Master has set us an example, when he said to the trembling woman: "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." Let Christian women, instead of shrinking with scorn and contempt from the fallen, extend a kindly hand to the Magdalen, and raise her from her degradation. Let them provide work and homes for their fallen sisters, and seek them out, and encourage them, and aid them in their attempts to lead a virtuous life.

The advice given by the author of the article above referred to will bear notice, though it comes up from the depths.

Their condition is a sad one indeed, and while we are convinced that prostitution can never be wholly eradicated, we can, at least, by proper efforts, diminish it in a greater or less degree. A gentleman of learning, wisdom, and Christian philanthropy, thus speaks of this unhappy being: "There has arisen in society a figure which is certainly the most mournful, and in some respects the most awful, upon which the eye of the moralist can dwell. That unhappy being, whose very name is a shame to speak; who counterfeits with a cold heart the transports of affection, and submits herself as the passive instrument of lust; who is scorned and insulted as the vilest of her sex, and doomed for the most part to disease, and abject wretchedness, and an early death; appears in every age as a perpetual symbol of the degradation and sinfulness of man. Herself the supreme type of vice, she is ultimately the most efficient guardian of virtue. But for her the unchallenged purity of countless happy homes would be polluted, and not a few who, in the pride of their untempted chastity, think of her with an indignant shudder, would have known the agony of remorse and despair. On that one degraded and ignoble

form are concentrated the passions that might have filled the world with shame. She remains—while creeds and civilization rise and fall—the eternal priestess of humanity, blasted for the sins of the people.”

Respectfully submitted,

W. JENKINS,

*Chief of Police.*





